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ABSTRACT

A survey investigated the attitudes of educated Greeks about possible modifications in the orthographic representation of written Greek. Subjects were 82 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program in English Language and Literature offered at the University of Cyprus. The subjects were administered a 20-item Likert-type questionnaire measuring attitudes toward a hypothetical orthographic reform scheme and how it may affect reading comprehension, the "character" of the language, the structure and semantics of the language, its acquisition by native an nonnative speakers, and Greek thinking and national identity. The proposed language changes included retention of several orthographic symbols and elimination of a number of others. Results indicate the respondents' concerns, in declining order, were related to the difficulties that such a reformation would create in finding the "etymology" of many Greek words. They point out the difficulties that will be created in distinguishing between pairs of words. Participants also were concerned that the historical continuity or the link between ancient and modern Greek would be lost. Other concerns were the expenses involved in reprinting older books, effect on the language's character, distinguishing between loan words and authentic Greek words, and the effect on Greek national identity and linguistic identity. They did feel the new system would remove obstacles to the learning of Greek by foreigners. Contains nine references. (MSE)

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS MODIFICATIONS IN THE ORTHOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF MODERN GREEK

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ABSTRACT

Attitudes towards modifications in the orthographic representation of Modern Greek.

People of all language backgrounds seem to 'respect' and 'revere' the way their language is written. Some phonetic and phonological variations may be 'tolerated' but any attempt to modify or change the orthographic representation of their language provokes skepticism, resentment and sometimes outright rejection.

Many attempts towards spelling modification in several languages took place in the last century but they have not always been successful. The reasons, many believe, are (a) *historical* (national pride, respect for the 'glorious' past, etc.), (b) *economic* (cost of reprinting, etc.), and mainly (c) *educational* (learners' resistance to change, habit formation, etc.).

In this paper an attempt is made to investigate educated adults' attitudes towards possible modifications in the orthographic representation of written Greek. For the purposes of this study a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to all students enrolled in the BA Program in English Language and Literature offered by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Cyprus.

Eighty-two questionnaires were completed in class (with an 85% rate of return). The 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire measures students' feelings and reactions towards certain orthographic changes and how these changes may affect such areas as (a) reading comprehension, (b) the 'character' of the language, (c) the structure and semantics of the language, (d) the link between ancient and modern Greek, and (e) the learning of Greek as a foreign language.

Writing and speech

In the long history of the study of language one can see divergent attitudes concerning the relationship between writing and speech. For thousands of years, written language held a preeminent place because it was the medium for literature. The written form of language was deemed to be solid and stable and as such it could provide language with permanence, importance and authority. By contrast, speech was characterized as fleeting and temporary and was not considered worthy of study. It is only in the present century that speech received the necessary attention and became the primary object of linguistic investigation. Changes in attitudes towards speech can be seen in the works of the eminent American linguist Bloomfield who stated that "Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks (1933:113)".

Writing Systems

Writing systems provide conventional sets of symbols for the representation of language. The three main types of writing systems are idiographic (based on logograms - whole words), syllabic (based on syllables) and alphabetic (based on sounds). In the alphabetic writing system, there is a direct correspondence between graphemes and phonemes, and it is considered to be the most economic and adaptable of all writing systems.

In all writing systems, words are given a specific visual image which, with the passage of time, becomes the "right", "ideal" or "correct" picture. To the visual picture an auditory image is attached and a given meaning is assigned. Thus, when literate people bring to mind the written representation of language, they automatically receive a triple combination: visual and auditory representation as well as meaning for every word in their language (Babiniotis, 1985).

Spelling systems

The three major ways of representing written language are (1) the phonetic spelling, (2) the phonological spelling and (3) the historical spelling. Some other ways of representing language are those which are based on the (a) grammatical principle, (b) the analogy principle, (c) the morphological principle and (d) the principle of semantic differentiation.

The **phonetic spelling** is the spelling according to which each grapheme represents one and only sound of the phonetic system of a given language. In this type of spelling, the relationship between the visual image (spelling) and pronunciation is one to one. We refer to those languages where each symbol represents a phoneme and not a sound, as having a **phonological spelling**. This type of spelling does not include allophones and it requires a greater degree of abstraction for the representation of language.

In the **historical spelling**, the relationship between symbols, sounds and phonemes is limited. In this system, sounds or phonemes are represented with more than one symbol and vice versa (for example, in the Greek language the sound /i/ is represented with six different symbols or combinations of symbols - ι, η, υ, ει, οι, υι).

The historical spelling constitutes the *diachronic* representation of language whereas the phonetic and phonological spelling systems constitute the *synchronic* representation of language. In terms of accuracy (preciseness), it seems that the phonetic spelling system ranks first followed by the phonological system.

Brief history of the Greek language

The Greek language dates back to the 3rd millennium BC and for many centuries remained as an oral language. Around 1000 BC, the Greeks borrowed the Phoenician consonantal alphabet, added letters for vowels and created the Greek alphabetic system that we know today.

The Greek language, like most languages, uses the historical spelling even when the pronunciation of much of its vocabulary has changed through time. For example, from the 6th century BC to the 3rd century AD, diphthongs developed into monophthongs (for example the /αι/ and /ει/ turned into /ε/ and /ι/ respectively), yet the Greek spelling system continues to designate them with digraphs. Also, as far back as the 3rd century BC, an orthographic reformation movement arose that lasted until the 9th century AD. This movement, known as "iotakismos", tried to reduce the various symbols designated for the sound /i/ (that is, ι, η, υ, οι, ει) to that of /ι/ (γιώτα). This movement was unsuccessful and the historical spelling of Greek still continues to retain all the various symbols of the sound /i/ and, the choice of the "correct" symbol is based on the etymological basis of words (Babiniotis, 1985).

In more recent times the issue of a spelling reform is closely linked with the long dispute between those who wanted to abolish the use of 'katharevousa' (puristic Greek) in schools and the introduction of 'demotiki' (demotic

Greek). One of the earliest proponents of a spelling reform is Vilaras, a strong believer in 'demotiki' who proposed about 180 years ago, among other things, the use of one /i/ (γιώτα), one /e/ (έψιλον) and one /o/ (όμικρον) and the elimination of all other symbols designating these sounds.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the renowned Greek linguist Hadzidakis (1899, reprinted 1977) opposed any new changes to the spelling system of Greek and considered any innovation in spelling as the introduction of "new demons". He also characterized the few minor changes that took place as "monstrosities" and forewarned of possible confusion that may occur between words by adopting the 'new' system.

As we have seen, very few changes in Greek spelling took place in the last century. The changes that can be considered rather significant are those introduced in 1982 and deal with (a) the simplification of stress marks (known as the monotonic system) and (b) the elimination of the breathing marks. In the first case, the three stress marks (βαρεία, οξεία, & περισπωμένη), which indicate primary stress in Modern Greek, were reduced to one - that of acute (οξεία) and in the second case, the two breathing marks (ψιλή & δασεία) placed over vowels in word initial position were abolished completely.

These minor changes were not readily accepted and, even today, we hear criticisms over the elimination of the spelling marks and the desire to reinstate them. Dalkos (1994), a Greek educator, presents de Sausseure's views on written language and spelling and tries to explain how these views encouraged spelling reformations in Greek. Dalkos considers spelling reforms unnecessary, detrimental and "catastrophic" to the Greek language. Artemiou (1996), another educator, in an article entitled "Orthographic reforms and dangers", presents the various spelling systems that exist, explains why the Greek language must follow the historical spelling and warns of potential dangers in orthographic changes. He accepts that simplifications in spelling may provide some "comfort" to learners (i.e. make writing easier), however, he contends that these changes may not necessarily bring about more correct or easier thinking.

Issues related to spelling reform are also treated extensively by Mesevrinos (1974) in his book entitled 'Η προδομένη γλώσσα' (Betrayed Language). Mesevrinos accepts that the historical spelling must be retained, however, he believes that the Greek alphabet does not express satisfactorily the language of the Greek people and identifies four deficiencies or weaknesses that must be addressed. These can be summarized as follows:

(a) there are certain sounds that can be designated for more than one symbol (i.e. the case of η, ι, υ, ει, οι, that of ε, αι and ο, ω).

(b) there are certain symbols that are assigned to more than one sound. For example, the symbol υ (ύψιλον) is pronounced as an [f] in some cases (i.e, αυτός) and as a [v] in some other cases (αύριο). The letter γ (γάμμα) is not the same in words like γάλα, γέρος, αγγόνι and the letter σ (σίγμα) is pronounced as [z] in front of certain consonants (σβώλος), etc.

(c) there are certain sounds that do not have their own symbols. For example, [b] is written as μπ, [d] as ντ, and [g] as γκ.

(d) the system for marking stress is outdated.

Three proposals have been suggested by various people and at different times for the solution of the spelling problem.

(a) follow strictly a phonetic spelling system (like the one proposed by Vilaras and his associates),

(b) replace the Greek alphabet with that of Latin (a move proposed by foreign Hellenistic scholars), or

(c) follow a middle road: simplify the historical spelling along with the implementation of extra symbols.

Mesevrinos rejects with outright anger and indignation the second solution, which he finds unacceptable, insulting to the Greek Nation and a threat to national existence. Also, Mesevrinos finds the first solution unacceptable for the following reasons: (a) it disrupts the historical continuity of the script from ancient to modern times and cuts off the language from its etymological roots, and (b) it creates spelling confusion in homonymous pairs of words like κλεινω-κλίνω, κρινω-κρίνο, etc. Mesevrinos also believes that it is too late nowadays to attempt this type of reformation which in the first place should have started at the time of the Apostles.

Mesevrinos regards the third solution as the most acceptable and viable. He argues for the simplification of the historical spelling and the introduction of the three extra symbols (graphemes) for the sounds [b], [d] and [g] by. He also expresses the urgency in adopting this reformation by the Greek educational system in order to avoid further damage to the Greek language and to its speakers.

As one might expect, the issue of spelling reforms is not restricted to the Greek language. Many reformation attempts in several languages (for French, see Laparra, 1991, Collectif, 1990) took place in the last century but with not

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much success.[1] The reasons why most attempts have not been successful can be attributed to several factors, the most important of which are **historical, sociocultural, economic** and **psychological/educational**. The historical reasons are mainly related to peoples' feelings towards their past (and every nation's past is always considered glorious by its own people!). Sociocultural reasons are related to national pride, ethnic identity, xenophobia, etc. Economic factors are those that deal with financial matters such as the cost of reprinting old books, changing road signs and maps. Finally, other reasons are psychological or educational which include learners' habit formation, environmental familiarity, resistance to change, etc.

Thus far, we have seen that suggestions towards spelling reforms, either for Greek or for other languages, are usually based on the investigators' personal understanding of the issue, their own philosophical bend, ideological background or political affiliation. As far as it can be ascertained, very few investigations considered, through empirical research, peoples' feelings and attitudes when forwarding suggestions for a spelling reform.

The purpose of the present study is to examine educated adults' feelings and impressions towards reformation and orthographic changes in written Greek. Once peoples' feelings are identified, measured and analyzed, then language planners and educators can be ready to:

(a) assist the public to overcome the fears and the phobias they may have about changes,
(b) explain to the public why their views may not be in accord with linguistic evidence and
(c) inform the public about the reasons that necessitate spelling reformation.

When the public is informed, suggestions for reformation can be readily accepted and implementation may proceed successfully.

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[1]The one attempt for reformation that can be considered successful is that in the Turkish language. In 1928 Kemal Ataturk initiated a reform in which the Arabic script was replaced by the Latin alphabet. Additional symbols were added to account for the extra sounds of Turkish.

METHOD

Subjects

Eighty-two male and female students enrolled in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Cyprus participated in this study (rate of participation 85%) by completing a questionnaire that was distributed in class during the Fall semester of the Academic year 1996-97.

Material

A 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire was prepared to measure students' attitudes and feelings towards a hypothetical orthographic reformation in written Greek and how this reformation may affect the Greek language and its people. Some items were written in a positive direction and some in a negative direction to avoid mechanical responses. The statements covered areas such as (a) reading comprehension, (b) the 'character' of the language, (c) the structure and semantics of the language, (d) the continuity of the language, (e) its acquisition by native and nonnative speakers, and (f) Greek thinking and national identity (for the actual questionnaire see Appendix A).

Procedure

The instructions to the participants were clearly given on the front page of the questionnaire and included three areas. In the first area, participants were told that the questionnaire was anonymous and their responses would remain private and confidential. In the second area, participants were asked to read a PROPOSAL concerning certain modifications in the Greek spelling system. Specifically, the proposal suggested to (a) retain the symbol /i/ (γιώτα) and eliminate the other five symbols (η, υ, ει, οι, υι), and (b) retain the /ο/ (όμικρον) and /ε/ (έψιλον) and eliminate the /ω/ (ωμέγα) and the digraph /αι/. In the third area, participants were instructed to indicate, on the basis of the proposal, how much they agreed or disagreed with the 20 statements of the questionnaire by using a scale from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

RESULTS

The responses of the eighty-two (82) completed questionnaires were tabulated and averages (means X) are presented on Table 1.

Table 1

Averages (means X) of responses to the 20 statements (5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 uncertain, 2 disagree, 1 strongly disagree)

By simplifying the Greek spelling system:	**Choices**	**X**
1. We will lose the direct link between Ancient and Modern Greek.	5 4 3 2 1	3.80
2. We will maintain the richness of the Greek language since this does not depend on such mechanical aspects as the spelling of words(R).	5 4 3 2 1	2.85
3. We will no longer be able to distinguish between homophones (i.e. words that sound the same, like τύχη, τοίχοι, τείχη but are spelled differently).	5 4 3 2 1	4.26
4. We will lose the ability to distinguish between authentic Greek words and loan-words.	5 4 3 2 1	3.41
5. We will make reading and writing much easier and more enjoyable experiences (R).	5 4 3 2 1	3.09
6. We will be unable to distinguish between (i) singulars and plurals (κερί - καιροί), (ii) genders of nouns (φίλη - φίλοι) and (iii) verbs from nouns (βάζω - βάζο).	5 4 3 2 1	4.09
7. We will encourage a more intelligent approach to literature because readers will concentrate on meaning rather than spelling in learning the Greek language (R).	5 4 3 2 1	2.32
8. We will encourage foreigners in learning the Greek language.	5 4 3 2 1	3.22

9. We will cause considerable expenses because books, maps, signs, etc.) will have to be rewritten.	5	4	3	2	1	3.66
10. We will have less symbols in the language and this will adversely affect the 'character' of the Greek language.	5	4	3	2	1	3.61
11. We will encourage young learners to use their mind more clearly and in turn this will enhance their general thinking abilities (R).	5	4	3	2	1	2.49
12. We will create difficulties in finding the etymology of many Greek words.	5	4	3	2	1	4.30
13. We will encourage the study of Greek history and literature (R).	5	4	3	2	1	2.47
14. We will run the risk of losing the distinctive qualities of Greek thinking.	5	4	3	2	1	3.00
15. We will remove obstacles that make the learning of Greek by foreigners extremely difficult.	5	4	3	2	1	3.48
16. We will encourage further simplifications to a point that the new language will no longer resemble the Greek language.	5	4	3	2	1	3.28
17. We will eliminate redundant and unnecessary symbols without affecting the grammatical functions of the Greek language (R).	5	4	3	2	1	2.59
18. We will encourage the younger generation to read, understand and enjoy the great literary works of the past (R).	5	4	3	2	1	2.38
19. We will create further alienation from the ancient Greek roots and in turn this may affect Greek national identity.	5	4	3	2	1	3.41
20. We will relieve young learners from the burden of having to memorize so many different symbols for the same sounds (R).	5	4	3	2	1	3.17

To facilitate the interpretation of the results, statements have been rank-ordered according to participants' reactions (from strongly agree to strongly disagree) and are presented on Table 2.

Table 2

Rank order of the 20 statements according to participants' reactions (from strongly agree to strongly disagree)

RANK	AVERAGE (X)	STATEMENT
		By simplifying the Greek spelling system:
# 1	4.30	We will create difficulties in finding the etymology of many Greek words.
# 2	4.26	We will no longer be able to distinguish between homophones (i.e. words that sound the same, like τύχη, τοίχοι, τείχη but are spelled differently).
# 3	4.09	We will be unable to distinguish between (i) singulars and plurals (κερί - καιροί), (ii) genders of nouns (φίλη - φίλοι) and (iii) verbs from nouns (βάζω - βάζο).
# 4	3.80	We will lose the direct link between Ancient and Modern Greek.
# 5	3.66	We will cause considerable expenses because books, maps, signs, etc.) will have to be rewritten.
# 6	3.61	We will have less symbols in the language and this will adversely affect the "character" of the Greek language.
# 7	3.48	We will remove obstacles that make the learning of Greek by foreigners extremely difficult.
# 8	3.41	We will lose the ability to distinguish between authentic Greek words and loan-words.

# 9	3.38	We will create further alienation from the ancient Greek roots and in turn this may affect Greek national identity.
# 10	3.28	We will encourage further simplifications to a point that the new language will no longer resemble the Greek language.
# 11	3.22	We will encourage foreigners in learning the Greek language.
# 12	3.17	We will relieve young learners from the burden of having to memorize so many different symbols for the same sounds.
# 13	3.09	We will make reading and writing much easier and more enjoyable experiences.
# 14	3.00	We will run the risk of losing the distinctive qualities of Greek thinking.
# 15	2.85	We will maintain the richness of the Greek language since this does not depend on such mechanical aspects as the spelling of words.
# 16	2.59	We will eliminate redundant and unnecessary symbols without affecting the grammatical functions of the Greek language.
# 17	2.49	We will encourage young learners to use their mind more clearly and in turn this will enhance their general thinking abilities.
# 18	2.47	We will encourage the study of Greek history and literature.
# 19	2.38	We will encourage the younger generation to read, understand and enjoy the great literary works of the past.
# 20	2.32	We will encourage a more intelligent approach to literature because readers will concentrate on meaning rather than spelling.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate educated adults' feelings and impressions towards orthographic reform in written Greek. Specifically, a proposal for a reform was introduced to participants which suggested to (a) retain the symbol /ι/ (γιώτα) and eliminate the other five (η, υ, ει, οι, υι), (b) retain the /ο/ (όμικρον) and /ε/ (έψιλον) and eliminate the /ω/ (ωμέγα) and the digraph /αι/. On the basis of this proposal, participants were instructed to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement (20 in total) by using the Likert scale (5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 uncertain, 2 disagree, 1 strongly disagree).

The answers to the 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire were statistically analyzed and the results are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 presents the average (mean) response to each statement. Table 2 presents in a rank order (from a high to a low level of agreement) the participants' reactions, feelings, and concerns towards the proposed orthographic reformation.

An overall examination of Table 2 reveals that the respondents were not in favor of any orthographic changes in written Greek. The respondents believe (at various degrees) that these changes will negatively affect the 'character', structure and historical continuity of the Greek language and the national identity of the Greek people.

ITEM BY ITEM ANALYSIS

A systematic examination of Table 2 (item by item) reveals the following interesting findings. In case the proposed spelling reformation is adopted, participants' number one concern is pragmatic in nature. It is related to the difficulties that such a reformation will create in finding the <u>etymology</u> of many Greek words (X= 4.30). The next two concerns are also pragmatic in nature. They point out the difficulties that will be created in <u>distinguishing</u> between pairs of words. For example, between homophones (τύχη - τοίχοι - τείχη), (X= 4.26), singulars and plurals (καρί - καιροί), genders of nouns (φίλη - φίλοι) and verbs and nouns (βάζω - βάζο) (X= 4.09).

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The fourth concern is related to the historical continuity of the Greek script. According to the participants, the link between Ancient and Modern Greek will be lost (X= 3.80). The next concern is economic in nature and has to do with the considerable expenses in reprinting old books, etc. (X= 3.66). The participants also believe that such a reformation will adversely affect the 'character' of the Greek language (X= 3.61).

One positive aspect in reforming the spelling system can be seen in the next item (7th in rank). Participants contend that the new system will remove obstacles that make the learning of Greek by foreigners extremely difficult (X= 3.48).

The next three concerns (eighth, ninth and tenth in rank) are closely related. The participants believe that readers will lose the ability to distinguish between authentic Greek words and loanwords (X= 3.41). Also, such a reformation will create further alienation from the Ancient Greek roots and in turn this change may affect Greek national identity (X= 3.38). Furthermore, this reformation will encourage further simplifications to a point that the "new" written language will no longer resemble the Greek language (X= 3.28).

Participants, to a certain degree, believe that reformation will encourage foreigners to learn the Greek language (X= 3.22). However, they do not seem to accept that the simplifications suggested in the reformation will relieve young learners from unnecessary burdens (X= 3.17) nor do they accept that reading and writing will become much easier and more enjoyable experiences (X= 3.09).

The participants are not certain that the simplifications suggested in the reformation will affect the distinctive qualities of Greek thinking (X= 3.00) but, somehow, they feel that the richness of the Greek language will be affected by such mechanical devices as the spelling of words (X= 2.85). Similarly, they believe that the elimination of the 'redundant' symbols (that is, the other symbols for the sound /i/, /o/ and /ε/), will affect the grammatical functions of the Greek language (X= 2.59).

Furthermore, participants do not agree that spelling reformation will encourage young learners to use their minds more clearly, nor are they ready to accept that reformation will enhance young learners' general thinking abilities (X= 2.49). Likewise, participants neither agree that reformation will encourage the study of Greek history and literature (X= 2.47) nor do they accept that young learners will read, understand and enjoy more the great literary works of the past (X= 2.38). Finally, the respondents reject the idea that spelling reformation will encourage a more intelligent approach to literature because readers will concentrate on meaning rather than spelling (X= 2.32).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this survey on attitudes towards spelling reform are in line with studies in several other situations. Although people can tolerate some phonetic and phonological variations in their language, they appear to 'respect' and 'revere' the way their language is written. A study by Laparra (1991) reports that the issue of spelling reform divided France into two: those in favor of reform and those against. In the reform project that was presented in 1990 and which sought the public's opinion (the first of its kind), showed that 60% of the population was hostile towards this reform. When one examines the reasons why the French opposed the reform, one can easily see that they are almost identical to those expressed by the participants of the present study.

The findings of the present study receive further support from other observations and reports. For example, Mackridge (1985), discloses that "most Greeks seem prepared to tolerate the difficulties of the orthography as long as the alternative would threaten to cut the modern language off from its ancient origins (p.368)". Furthermore, Mackridge (1985) predicts that "despite the introduction of the monotonic system, it seems unlikely that further spelling reforms will take place in the near future (p. 368)".

It may be true that spelling reform may not be imminent in written Greek (at least for now); however, the results of this survey can be very useful for language-in-education policy planners. Armed with this information, policy planners can be ready to inform the public about the need for a reform and assist them in overcoming their fears and misgivings.

It can be easily seen that the concerns expressed by the participants of this study are totally subjective, do not reflect reality and cannot be supported by linguistic evidence. For example, we know that 'clashes' in homophony can be easily resolved from the general context. It is also ludicrous to believe that the elimination of certain symbols will affect the 'character' of the Greek language. It is well known that the earliest Greek writings were in capital letters and without accent marks (these were introduced much later in written Greek). Could anyone claim that today's script is less authentically Greek than that of the past?

Many would claim that spoken language is directly related (along with other important factors) to national identity, however, no study ever showed that changes in the orthography affects a country's national identity. Even in the extreme case of the Turkish language, where the script was completely changed, no evidence has been presented which shows that Turks' national identity suffered in any way. Also, the 'richness' of any language is not reflected in its written form. It may be true that some people find certain

languages more 'melodic' or more 'scientific' than others, very few, if any, ever expressed qualitative views about the 'beauty' and the 'eloquence' of the written form of a given language.

Furthermore, there is no experimental evidence (until now) about the effects of spelling reform on reading comprehension. It is not known either whether the simplification of written Greek will encourage young learners to use their mind more or whether reading and writing will become much easier and enjoyable experiences, however, it is rather well known, that "even educated Greeks have perennial problems with orthography (Mackridge, 1985:40)" and something should to be done about this.

Many would argue, like the participants, that spelling reformation will create insurmountable problems in finding the etymology of many Greek words. This is an argument persistently presented by those opposing any type of spelling reform in written Greek. Even if one accepts that etymological searching will be hampered, it is possible, on the other hand, that the benefits from simplification would outweigh the losses. This, of course, remains to be seen as more and more research is undertaken in the area of orthographic reform.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

Dear Student,

The following questionnaire has been prepared in order to examine your feelings and opinions on spelling and the purpose of the study to follow is strictly academic. The questionnaire is anonymous, therefore, your responses will remain private and confidential.

First, read carefully the following PROPOSAL. On the basis of your understanding of this proposal, we would like you to decide how much you agree or disagree with the 20 statements that follow the proposal by using a scale from 1 to 5.

PROPOSAL ON GREEK SPELLING

A committee of educators and linguists examined various issues concerning the Greek spelling system and decided to introduce certain spelling modifications which they plan to forward to the Ministry of Education for consideration.

The committee believes that it is absolutely unnecessary for the Greek spelling system to have so many different symbols (or combinations of symbols) for representing the same (identical) sound. For example, the sound /i/ is represented by six different symbols (**η, ι, υ, ει, οι, υι**), two symbols for /o/ (**ο** and **ω**) and two symbols for /ε/ (**ε** and **αι**).

The committee recommends that the Greek spelling system should:
(1) retain the symbol /ι /(γιώτα) and eliminate the other five (η, υ, ει, οι, υι),
(2) retain the symbol /ο/ and eliminate the symbol /ω/ and
(3) retain the symbol /ε/ and eliminate the symbol /αι/.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

On the basis of the above PROPOSAL, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following 20 statements by using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Simply circle the number of your choice.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE CONSISTENTLY:

Strongly Agree (5)
Agree (4)
Uncertain (3)
Disagree (2)
Strongly Disagree (1)

	Circle the number of your choice				
By simplifying the Greek spelling system:					
1. We will lose the direct link between Ancient and Modern Greek.	5	4	3	2	1
2. We will maintain the richness of the Greek language since this does not depend on such mechanical aspects as the spelling of words.	5	4	3	2	1
3. We will no longer be able to distinguish between homophones (i.e. words that sound the same, like τύχη, τοίχοι, τείχη but are spelled differently).	5	4	3	2	1
4. We will lose the ability to distinguish between authentic Greek words and loan-words.	5	4	3	2	1
5. We will make reading and writing much easier and more enjoyable experiences.	5	4	3	2	1
6. We will be unable to distinguish between (i) singulars and plurals (καρί - καιροί), (ii) genders of nouns (φίλη - φίλοι) and (iii) verbs from nouns (βάζω - βάζο).	5	4	3	2	1
7. We will encourage a more intelligent approach to literature because readers will concentrate on meaning rather than spelling.	5	4	3	2	1
8. We will encourage foreigners in learning the Greek language.	5	4	3	2	1
9. We will cause considerable expenses because books, maps, signs, etc.) have to be rewritten.	5	4	3	2	1

10. We will have less symbols in the language and this will adversely affect the "character" of the Greek language.	5	4	3	2	1
11. We will encourage young learners to use their mind more clearly and in turn this will enhance their general thinking abilities.	5	4	3	2	1
12. We will create difficulties in finding the etymology of many Greek words.	5	4	3	2	1
13. We will encourage the study of Greek history and literature.	5	4	3	2	1
14. We will run the risk of losing the distinctive qualities of Greek thinking.	5	4	3	2	1
15. We will remove obstacles that make the learning of Greek by foreigners extremely difficult.	5	4	3	2	1
16. We will encourage further simplifications to a point that the new language will no longer resemble the Greek language.	5	4	3	2	1
17. We will eliminate redundant and unnecessary symbols without affecting the grammatical functions of the Greek language.	5	4	3	2	1
18. We will encourage the younger generation to read, understand and enjoy the great literary works of the past.	5	4	3	2	1
19. We will create further alienation from the ancient Greek roots and in turn this may affect Greek national identity.	5	4	3	2	1
20. We will relieve young learners from the burden of having to memorize so many different symbols for the same sounds.	5	4	3	2	1